

Policy and Procedure	Date Issued 7/2/12	Section	Policy Number	Page 1
Milwaukee County Behavioral Health Division  Community Services Branch	Date Revised	Subject: Heat Advisory Policy and Procedure- for TCM and CSP Providers		

## 1. POLICY:

It is the policy of the Behavioral Health Division (BHD) that we recognize the vulnerability of consumers to heat related illnesses (i.e. heat stroke, heat exhaustion, etc.). We recommend that all consumers be educated regarding the heat, assessed for vulnerability, and protected during a heat emergency. A heat emergency is considered to exist when the Milwaukee Health Department in conjunction with the National Weather Service announces a heat advisory.

## 2. PROCEDURE:

1. All agency program staff will be educated on the methods for preventing heat-related illness (heat exhaustion and heat stroke) and the need to be able to make determinations about when to call for emergency personnel. They must know how to act, and act quickly, to cool the person down when *any* of these symptoms are present due to their rapid progression.
2. Staff will educate all consumers on the dangers of hot weather, providing written and verbal information on how to prevent heat exhaustion and heat stroke, what the symptoms of both are, and what to do if symptoms are present (i.e. who to call to receive immediate assistance). Staff will educate all consumers concerning the side effects of their medication during hot weather.
3. Staff will assess all consumers' living environments as to ventilation and presence of adequate cooling equipment such as air conditioning and/or fans. Staff will explore what options are available to the consumer to obtain cooling equipment and assist them with accessing it.
4. Staff will educate all consumers regarding the need for extra hydration and methods for cooling off (i.e. taking cool baths/showers, drinking extra non -alcoholic and non -caffeinated liquids).
5. Staff will educate all consumers on the dangers of sunstroke and sunburn. Consumers will be informed of their increased risk of both because of the medication they take, as well as the importance of wearing proper clothing, use of sunscreens, wearing hats and sunglasses, and avoiding the sun during the warmest part of the day.
6. Staff will give all consumers written and verbal information on places they can go to cool off.
7. With each consumer's assistance, staff will identify family members, neighbors, or friends of the consumer who are willing to act as an emergency contact to help monitor the consumer's health during hot weather. Staff will include the names and phone numbers of these emergency contacts in the agency's on-call book.
8. Consumers will acknowledge receipt of heat education by signing a Heat Harm Reduction form (**See attachment 1**) on an annual basis beginning April 15<sup>th</sup> and completed by May 15th. This form will be placed in the consumer's medical record. Consumers will be given handouts regarding Heat Education available at the following website: <http://city.milwaukee.gov/HeatHealth>.

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9. Staff will identify consumers at highest risk because of their behaviors (i.e. shut off air conditioners, refuse to leave the window open when they do not have air conditioners and rely on windows for ventilation, wearing inappropriate clothing, have multiple risk factors) especially if they live alone. The case managers will provide names of high-risk consumers to the on-call case manager.
10. During a heat advisory, case managers will make daily face to face or phone contact with these high risk consumers. On weekends and holidays, those consumers not seen for other services will be contacted by the on-call case manager. At these contacts, the consumer will be assessed for heat related illnesses, encouraged to use cooling equipment, encouraged to drink non -alcoholic and non - caffeinated liquids, and informed of cooling off techniques. If staff is unable to communicate with the consumer, their emergency contacts will be asked to assist in a welfare check. The police and/or paramedics may be contacted for welfare checks if unable to communicate with the consumer or their emergency contact.

**Attachment 1: Heat Harm Reduction Form**

Reviewed & Approved by:



Jennifer Wittwer, Associate Director      **Adult Community Services Branch**